Rationale

Wachsman is seeking USD 1,800,000 (₳3,600,000) to deliver the full scope of research, communications strategy, and activation outlined in this proposal. Resources have already been allocated to bootstrap initial work, but given the ecosystem-wide importance of this initiative, additional funding ensures independence, continuity, and the capacity to execute a complete, 18-month program that delivers measurable impact for Cardano and its global community.

This initiative goes far beyond a marketing exercise; it builds a long-term foundation for Cardano's narrative, visibility, and ecosystem resilience. By combining deep market intelligence with strategic communications, the program ensures that every message, milestone, and campaign is informed by data, validated through insight, and designed to drive adoption.

The value of this initiative extends beyond marketing outputs to long-term ecosystem resilience:

- **Sharper differentiation:** Clear benchmarking against peer Layer-1s to define what makes Cardano unique - its governance model, technical integrity, and mission-driven vision - and why that difference matters for developers, enterprises, and institutions.

- **Smarter campaigns, higher efficiency:** Research-led messaging validated through audience testing before launch, ensuring that campaigns are focused, impactful, and cost-efficient across global markets.

- **Faster adoption and ecosystem growth:** Audience insights and segmentation reduce friction and misunderstandings, enabling communications that speak directly to developers, enterprises, and policy stakeholders, thereby accelerating adoption and participation across the value chain.

- **Greater community confidence and alignment:** A transparent, research-informed approach demonstrates that Cardano is both mission-driven and market-smart, empowering stakeholders with shared messaging frameworks and accessible toolkits.

- **Stronger global perception:** Real-time brand health tracking, sentiment analytics, and media engagement ensure Cardano stays ahead of the narrative – visible, credible, and consistently positioned as a global leader in blockchain innovation.

By integrating **market research, narrative strategy, campaign execution, and knowledge transfer**, this initiative gives Cardano a sustainable, evidence-based communications infrastructure that continues to deliver value long after the program concludes.

The table below outlines the estimated effort, resources already secured, and additional resources required to execute the initiative in full.

Budget Management & Administration

In detail, the requested ₳3,600,000 will be distributed across milestones and dedicated workstreams to ensure transparency, accountability, and measurable delivery:

Phase 1: Cardano's Intelligence Baseline
Layer 1 Competitor Research Report   - Benchmarking Cardano against Ethereum, Solana, Sui, and others.   - Analysis of media narrative clusters shaping perception, developer traction, and strategic differentiators.   **Global Audience Segmentation & Messaging Framework**   - Identification and profiling of key audience personas (developers, enterprises, investors, regulators, Catalyst participants).   - Development of key messages against user and dev sentiment.   - Behavioral, psychographic, and media sentiment mapping.   - Channel and narrative strategy recommendations.   **Regional Trend Mapping Reports Across Priority Markets**   - Perception testing and feedback from users and developers in the US, UK, Africa, and Asia Pacific (including Southeast Asia).

- ○ Insights into resonance gaps, engagement blockers, adoption drivers and ecosystem expectations.

- **Leadership Insight Workshop**
  - ○ Aligning narrative windows with product and event milestones
  - ○ Socialise findings with Cardano leadership and dRep community, in addition to a discussion of opportunities and next steps ahead of Phase 2

Phase 2: Cardano's Proof of Perception

- **Spokesperson & Messaging Resonance Dashboard**
  - ○ Analysis of Cardano spokesperson visibility, tone, and trust velocity around priority narratives and messaging.
  - ○ Competitive voice mapping benchmarking against ecosystem and industry peers.

- **Quarterly Brand Health Report (Baseline Edition)**
  - ○ Comprehensive view of Cardano's Share of Voice, Net Sentiment Score, Brand Recall Index, and Thematic Penetration metrics.
  - ○ Competitive positioning in earned media, social platforms, and search visibility.

Phase 3: Activating Insights-to-Execution Communications

- **Campaign Testing Report**
  - ○ Validation of Cardano's key narratives, value propositions, and stress-testing of messaging hypotheses and communications scenarios to optimize future campaigns.

- **Insights-to-Execution Communications Playbook**
  - ○ A strategic playbook linking intelligence to action: media toolkits, campaign-timing maps, and narratives tailored to region and audience.

- **Global Campaign Activation Calendar**
  - ○ Development and execution of two signature campaign activations under the 'Build · Scale · Lead' communications framework.

○ Synchronisation of execution moments with the Cardano Vision 2030 roadmap and flagship industry events such as Consensus, TOKEN2049, and ETHCC.

Phase 4: Knowledge Transfer & Community Handover

- **Cardano Research Hub**
  - A centralized, open-access repository designed to preserve institutional knowledge and ensure continuity of outputs. The Hub will house research findings, narrative frameworks, regional playbooks, and campaign toolkits in one structured platform.
  - It will enable future contributors, from SPOs to dApp teams, to build upon a prior baseline rather than start from scratch, creating cumulative progress across the ecosystem.

- **Community Intelligence Workshops**
  - Hands-on training sessions for Cardano teams, SPOs, and partners to strengthen data-driven communications capability. Participants will learn how to interpret insights, update datasets, and apply frameworks to evolving narratives, with access to the Wachsman team for guided troubleshooting during the transition period.

- **Community Handover**
  - A structured transition that formalizes open-source ownership of all outputs. A final handover workshop will equip community representatives with the context, tools, and confidence to maintain and expand the initiative independently.

The estimated duration is 18 months total, covering stakeholder alignment, research execution, insight generation, strategic communications delivery and strategic handover. The project team is composed of senior leadership and specialists across regions and disciplines:

- **2 Managing Directors** – Senior leadership ensuring global consistency, stakeholder engagement, and regional alignment.

- **1 Executive Director** – Oversees delivery across Asia Pacific and provides regional insights for trend mapping and audience analysis.

- **3 Directors (Strategic Oversight)** – Ensure alignment with Cardano's ecosystem-wide goals and integration with the 2026 marketing roadmap.

- **2 Senior Consultant / Research Lead** – Designs and oversees competitor benchmarking, brand tracking, and audience segmentation.

- **3 Consultants (Communications & Project Manager)** – Synthesize research into actionable frameworks and coordinate workflow across workstreams.

- **3 Analysts (Media, Sentiment & Social Listening Tools)** – Operate analytics dashboards and surface insights across digital and media ecosystems.

- **1 Qualitative Research Specialist** – Leads focus group design, facilitation, and narrative validation sessions.

- **3 Associates (Communications & Content Support) –** Support campaign execution, manage content calendars, draft communications materials, and assist in regional media engagement.

- **3 Executives (Operations & Reporting Support) –** Provide operational support, track project milestones, compile performance reports.

Month	Milestone	Budget
	Phase 1: Cardano's Intelligence Baseline	
1	• Project kickoff and stakeholder alignment • Finalize research methodology and data sources	300,000 ADA
2	• Launch competitor benchmarking and sentiment tracking • Initial media and social listening setup	200,000 ADA
3	• Audience segmentation and motivation mapping • Preliminary perception and sentiment analysis report	200,000 ADA
4	• Intelligence Baseline Report delivery	150,000 ADA

	• Internal presentation of findings and implications for comms	
Q2 - Phase 2: Cardano's Proof of Perception		
5	• Messaging framework validation and spokesperson mapping • Initial toolkit architecture for key regions	300,000 ADA
6	• Quarterly Brand Health Report (Baseline Edition) • Updated competitor and sentiment benchmarking	150,000 ADA
7	• Development of regional communications toolkits • Draft narrative playbook and messaging templates	150,000 ADA
8	• Launch of Cardano Research Hub (Beta) • Leadership Workshop on insights application	150,000 ADA
Q3 - Phase 3: Activating Insights-to-Execution Communications		
9	• Campaign Testing Report with validated narratives • PR scenario simulations and message stress-testing	250,000 ADA
10	• Insights-to-Execution Playbook finalized • Creative and channel planning for key roadmap activations	130,000 ADA
11	• Global Roadmap Launch Campaign executed • Tier-1 media engagement and coverage tracking	130,000 ADA
12	• Long-lead storytelling and thought-leadership content rollout	130,000 ADA
13	• Governance and Tokenization communications campaigns • Regional amplification in priority markets	130,000 ADA
14	• Tier-1 media relations maintenance and influencer engagement • Brand Health Tracking (Quarterly Report 2)	130,000 ADA
15	• Campaign performance review and synthesis report • Recommendations for next-cycle activation	130,000 ADA
Q4 - Phase 4: Knowledge Transfer & Community Handover		

16	• Community intelligence workshops (2–3 sessions) • Cardano Research Hub finalized for ecosystem access	250,000 ADA
17	• Capability-building sessions for Cardano teams • Delivery of long-term communications roadmap	100,000 ADA
18	• Final Insights and Impact Report delivered • Program closeout presentation to governance stakeholders	34,107 ADA

Definition of Done (Target State for This Proposal)
- All **research and communications deliverables** - including intelligence reports, messaging frameworks, toolkits, and brand health dashboards - are completed and shared with the Cardano Foundation and ecosystem teams.
- **Strategic handover and capability sessions** are conducted to ensure internal teams can independently apply and update the Research Hub and communications frameworks.
Cardano's **marketing, ecosystem growth, and governance stakeholders** are equipped with a clear, evidence-based foundation to guide 2026 campaigns and external communications.
Success will be measured by the quality and adoption of outputs, stakeholder satisfaction, and the integration of insights into campaign planning and execution.

Administration and Sustainability
To ensure long-term usability, Wachsman will provide:
- **Cardano Research Hub**: Wachsman will create a dedicated Cardano Research Hub which is a centralized and user-friendly repository of insights, findings, and strategic recommendations. This hub will serve as a permanent reference point for communications, housing research outputs, narrative frameworks, audience profiles, and campaign toolkits. Accessible to relevant members of the Cardano Foundation, Intersect, and ecosystem teams, it will empower ecosystem participants to make informed communication and campaign decisions long after this engagement concludes.

- **Knowledge Transfer & Internal Enablement**: All research outputs, including audience insights, messaging frameworks, campaign playbooks, and brand health dashboards will be delivered in reusable, easily updatable formats. Wachsman will conduct structured handover sessions with Cardano's internal teams (marketing, governance, and ecosystem growth) to ensure seamless continuity in use, application, and iteration.

- **Brand Health Report**: Quarterly brand health reporting, once the baseline version is established, will provide continuity for Cardano's internal team or trusted partners. By retaining the same methodology and metrics, the network will sustain visibility into narrative performance, sentiment trends, and competitive positioning over time.

- **Campaign Execution Alignment**: The validated messaging framework and audience segmentation models will directly inform future campaign planning, ensuring that every new initiative or signature activation, whether led by Cardano Foundation, Intersect, or community teams, remains consistent with the network's global narrative and Vision 2030 roadmap.

- **Optional Ongoing Support** - Wachsman can be retained post-project as a strategic advisor to support campaign optimization, track market shifts, and provide ad hoc updates to research deliverables, ensuring Cardano's communications remain data-driven and responsive.

Reporting

To ensure accountability and ongoing visibility, Wachsman will commit to a structured reporting framework throughout the project:

- **Monthly activity reports:** Published to Intersect and shared with the Catalyst community, outlining activities that have been completed, interim findings, and progress against deliverables. Each update will specify which milestone(s) were achieved that month.

- **Milestone-based deliverables:** Upon completion of each phase, Wachsman will release an executive summary of key findings for community review, alongside the full deliverable/report provided to governance stakeholders.

- **Quarterly AMA sessions**: To promote open dialogue and feedback, quarterly AMA sessions will be co-hosted with Intersect. During these sessions, Wachsman will present interim results, address community questions, and gather input that can refine ongoing research and communications strategies. This ensures findings are not only reported, but also stress-tested and co-validated by the community.

- **Final knowledge transfer & community handover**: As the project closes at the end of the engagement, Wachsman will host a comprehensive session focused on the Cardano Research Hub – a centralised, accessible repository of all insights, datasets, and communications tools. This session will mark the formal transition of project outputs into community stewardship, ensuring long-term transparency and continuity.